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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 005898

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SUBJECT: XINJIANG POLICE: ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM THREATENS
CHINA'S WEST

REF: BEIJING 00188

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Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson.
Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) Representatives Rick Larsen (D-WA) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) visited Urumqi, Kashi and China's border with Kyrgyzstan during an August 29-31 trip to the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Public Security Bureau officials simultaneously touted the success of anti-terrorism efforts in Xinjiang while claiming that Uighur terror groups are still training recruits and building links overseas. Xinjiang officials said Chinese public security forces are enjoying a higher level of cooperation from the Uighur community, a reflection of greater economic prosperity and increasing distaste for violent extremism among Xinjiang Muslims. In addition to terrorism, Xinjiang PSB officials said they face growing smuggling of Southwest Asian heroin via the border with Pakistan. At the border, customs officials indicated that the interdiction of guns and explosives remains the top priority. End summary.

PSB Exhibit on Uighur Terror/Separatist Groups

2. (SBU) Representatives Rick Larsen (D-WA) and Mark Kirk (R-IL), accompanied by Poloff and DEA Attache, visited the Xinjiang Public Security Bureau (PSB) headquarters in Urumqi August 29. The trip was sponsored by the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. At the start of the visit, PSB officials showed Representatives Larsen and Kirk an exhibit presenting the PRC view of the history of Xinjiang terrorist/separatist movements. The exhibit focused on a series of violent attacks, demonstrations and assassinations carried out by Uighur groups from 1990 to 1997. At the end of the tour, Xinjiang PSB officers showed the delegation a room full of confiscated literature and weapons. The weapons displayed included handguns, homemade rifles, homemade

grenades, crossbows and improvised explosives. Officers giving the tour said most of the weapons confiscated in Xinjiang come from Russia, though some exported Chinese land mines and other weapons have been smuggled into Xinjiang from third countries.

Uighur Terror Groups Still Active

¶3. (C) Following the exhibit, the Vice Director General of the Xinjiang PSB, Hashim Aji (Chinese name: Aximu Aji), said that despite a lack of violent incidents in Xinjiang since 2000, Uighur terror groups are still active and have numerous links to extremist organizations abroad. Aji said Uighur terrorists continue to receive training in Afghanistan and Chechnya and have ties to extremists in Kashmir. Aji said the detention of 20 (sic) Uighurs in Guantanamo Bay demonstrates that Uighur separatists are a part of the international terrorist movement. To bolster his case that Uighur terrorists remain a present threat, Aji described in detail a January 5, 2007 raid by Xinjiang police on an alleged terrorist training camp (reftel). One police officer and 17 terrorists were killed in the raid, which took place in an area close to the Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan borders. Aji said the camp was connected to the East Turkistan Liberation Organization (ETLO). The PSB reportedly learned of the camp thanks to an informant. The ETLO members present at the camp were planning to carry out bus bombings and attacks on bridges, according to Aji.

¶4. (C) (NOTE: Aji's claim of ETLO involvement contradicts January statements from both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Xinjiang PSB that stated the camp was operated by the East Turkistan Islamic

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Movement (ETIM), not ETLO. In Chinese, Aji frequently used the term "dong tu," a more vague term that could denote any East Turkistan organization. The interpreter, however, used the term ETLO.)

ETLO, Uighur Youth Congress Deserve Designation

¶5. (C) Aji said he was happy the United Nations designated ETIM a terror group in 2002, but he argued that other Uighur organizations, such as ETLO and the World Uighur Youth Congress, also deserve official designation as terrorist organizations. Representative Kirk urged Aji to provide more specific information regarding recent activity by suspected Uighur terrorists. Only with better and more recent information, Rep. Kirk said, could the United States support additional designations. When asked about the activities of Uighur groups in neighboring countries, Aji said he is still concerned with training activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Xinjiang PSB is also concerned Uighur terror groups are targeting Chinese businesspeople in Pakistan. Aji positively described counterterrorism cooperation with neighboring countries. When asked about the presence of direct, cross-border communications channels between the Xinjiang PSB and neighboring police forces, Aji said all cooperation was conducted through Interpol.

Golden Crescent Heroin Entering Xinjiang

¶6. (C) Jin Peng, head of the counternarcotics division of the Xinjiang PSB, told Representatives Larsen and Kirk that heroin entering from Afghanistan and Pakistan is a growing problem. Previously, most of the heroin consumed in Xinjiang, as in the rest of

China, came from the Burma/Golden Triangle region. Xinjiang police seized just 8.2 kilograms of Southwest Asian heroin between 1991 and 2004. Since 2005, Jin said, Xinjiang police and border authorities are increasingly interdicting Southwest Asian heroin, which accounted for 67 of the 123 kilograms seized in Xinjiang in 2006. Jin acknowledged these seizures are just the "tip of the iceberg" with respect to the actual amount entering Xinjiang. While most of the heroin entering Xinjiang is destined for China's coastal regions, local consumption is on the rise. Jin said Xinjiang has an estimated 70,000 to 80,000 heroin users out of a total population of 20 million. Jin said drug smuggling primarily involves third-country nationals, particularly Africans. The extensive use of these "mules," Jin said, means the Xinjiang PSB is often unable to prosecute the ringleaders of these smuggling organizations. While not offering specifics, Aji commented that Xinjiang authorities are worried drug money, along with donations from overseas Uighurs, is helping to fund terror/separatist groups.

Lunch with Xinjiang People's Congress Chairman -----

17. (SBU) Over lunch, Xinjiang People's Congress Chairman Abdurehim Amet told the delegation that Central Government budget subsidies and support for Xinjiang's economic development was winning hearts and minds, and ordinary citizens are increasingly willing to cooperate with authorities to prevent terrorism. Asked about Uighur attitudes toward the migration of Han Chinese into Xinjiang, Amet claimed most of the Han arriving are skilled workers who help boost the economy. Amet criticized exiled Uighur activist Rebiya Kadeer, describing her as a "criminal" who most Uighurs condemn.

Kashi PSB on Explosives, Drug Interdiction -----

18. (C) In Kashi (Kashgar), Representatives Larsen and Kirk met PSB Deputy Director Yan Weiguo. Echoing

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Abdurehim Amet's comments, Yan attributed the lack of violent terror attacks since 2000 to the increasing willingness of the Uighur community to report illegal activity. The Kashi area is experiencing 12 percent annual GDP growth, Yan said, which is increasing support for the government. That Xinjiang had not experienced any recent car bombings reflects the PSB's success at controlling explosives. Yan said the PSB had recently uncovered a case of would-be terrorists attempting to acquire explosive material used by oil companies.

19. (C) Regarding anti-narcotics efforts, Yan said in 2006 Kashi police arrested 17 drug smugglers and seized 38 kilograms of heroin. These cases involved individuals from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Lesotho smuggling heroin to Xinjiang from Pakistan and then on to coastal cities, particularly Guangzhou. Yan said Chinese police arrested one third-country national who had made three drug runs within 20 days, each time traveling from Central Asia to Kashi and then to Guangzhou.

Trip to the Kyrgyzstan Border -----

110. (SBU) Representatives Larsen and Kirk visited the Tuergate (Turugart) border crossing near Kashi August 30, which is guarded by a People's Liberation Army detachment. Poloff observed about 15 soldiers (all

Han Chinese) both at the border itself and at a barracks approximately one mile downhill from the crossing. A PLA officer told Poloff that soldiers typically are assigned to one-month shifts at the crossing and are rotated between other border stations and posts further inland. Trucks and buses cross the border from Kyrgyzstan into China, undergo an initial document inspection at the PLA garrison and then proceed by gravel road approximately 130 kilometers into China to an immigration and customs inspections station. During a one-hour stay at the border, Poloff observed 20 large trucks (half with Chinese plates, half with Kyrgyzstan plates) and one Bishkek-Kashi passenger bus crossing from the Kyrgyz side. (Note: Normal traffic had been restricted to facilitate the delegation's travel.) Customs officials at the inland station told the CODEL that the Tuergate border handles 30,000 vehicle crossings (both ways) in one year. The border is open year-round Monday through Friday, weather permitting, and closes every evening at eight o'clock.

¶11. (SBU) At the inland customs station, all cargo is off-loaded, inspected, and, if arriving on a Kyrgyz vehicle, transferred to Chinese-plated trucks. Customs agents told the delegation that every item of cargo is examined. The delegation observed customs officials running bales of Kyrgyz wool through x-ray machines. Customs officials said their primary goal is to interdict weapons and explosives. A customs officer told Poloff that they had not uncovered any illegal drug shipments at the port. The previous year, he said, inspectors had found a false bottom in one truck that was used for smuggling alcohol. Customs authorities regularly find rocks, scrap metal, old tools and other items inserted into bales of Kyrgyzstani wool to make them heavier. This "contraband" was stacked on shelves next to the x-ray machine.

¶12. (U) The CODEL did not have an opportunity to clear this cable.
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